on the Indo-Pak borders and LoC during the year 2002-2003 and as on date;

(b) whether it is a fact that the casualties during de-mining operations were more mainly due to the lack of advanced de-mining equipments;

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to provide the Army with advanced de-mining and safety equipments for expeditious and safe completion of de-mining operations; and

(d) if not, the reasons for casualties in de-mining operations?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The number of Army personnel & civilians killed in de-Mining operations on the Indo-Pak border are being compiled and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Manual recovery of minefields is an inescapable part of the de-mining process along with other methods, and thus cannot altogether be dispensed with. Accidents arise out of the operational urgency of laying mine fields, adverse whether and terrain conditions prevailing at the time the mines were laid and recovered, mines drifting due to heavy rains, rodents moving the mines and growth of dense vegetation obstructing the recovery operations in the minefield.

Delay in Arrival of Hawk AJTs

1478. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of signing agreements, the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers are expected to reach India in September, 2007;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay; and

(c) how Indian Air Force will train their pilots meanwhile?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) According to the contract with M/s BAe Systems Limited, United Kingdom, the delivery of the 24 Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers in flyaway

condition is expected to commence from September, 2007 and would be completed by February, 2008.

(c) Till the new Hawk aircraft are available for the Indian Air Force, as an interim measure, 751 AF pilots will be trained in U.K. in terms of the contract with M/s BAe Systems Limited, UK.

Explosion at Amassa godown of Air Force in M.P.

†1479. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a major explosion has taken place at Amassa based godown of Air Force in M.P. recently;

(b) whether there is a possibility of the involvement of terrorists In the said explosion; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the said explosion alongwith the estimated loss incurred due to the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) A major explosion took place on 10th July, 2004 at Amla Depot. A Court of Inquiry is in progress to ascertain the reasons of explosion and to assess the exact loss incurred on this account.

Policy for Defence Procurements

1480. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that henceforth defence procurement policy and programmes can be finalised only after the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)'s and CAG's nod;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has finalised the details; and

(c) whether this method will not hamper the smooth procurement process in Defence deals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.